

Camping in Congaree National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



General Information

- Camping is allowed in the park by permit only. Permits are free.
- Permits may be obtained at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center from 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM except Christmas Day.
- Campers arriving after 5:00 PM should obtain their permit at 8:30 AM the following day.
- Maximum length of stay is 14 days.

Primitive Group Campsites

- The park has two primitive campsites that can accommodate groups, the AFTER HOURS site and the BLUFF site. Each have picnic tables and fire rings.
- The **AFTER HOURS** site is located in an open field next to the After Hours Parking Area. The area has six campsites and one portable toilet.
- The **BLUFF** site, a small open field (80 x 50 yards) can be reached via the Bluff Trail and is a short 3/4 mi. hike from the After Hours Parking Area. Toilets are not available. Camping is not permitted in the surrounding forest.
- Fires are permitted at these sites under the following regulations:
 - Fires must be contained within the existing fire rings.
 - Only "down and dead" firewood may be collected.
 - Wood is the only fuel that may be used in the fire rings.

Backcountry Sites:

- All backcountry camping, including canoe camping, is primitive - no facilities. The following regulations apply:
- Campsites must be at least 100 feet away from trails, roads, streams, and other bodies of water and at least 500 feet away from the boardwalk or park infrastructure.
 - Open fires are prohibited. Backpacking type cookstoves are permitted.
 - To minimize impact on fragile wetland areas, please limit group size to 4-6 people per backcountry site.

For Your Convenience:

- Visitor Center restrooms are open from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. A portable toilet is available at the After Hours campsite.
- Potable water is available from a faucet at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center. Ask for a key to turn on the water.
- **SAFETY:** Campers should be aware of rising floodwater, poison ivy, snakes, and insects. A map, compass, first-aid kit, insect repellent, and drinking water are highly recommended.

Regulations

- All vehicles must be parked outside the main gate overnight.
- Possession of weapons and hunting are prohibited.
- Pets must be leashed or physically restrained at all times.
- Possessing, destroying, injuring, defacing, removing, digging, or disturbing natural, cultural or archaeological resources is prohibited.
- Leave no trace - pack it in, pack it out.

Helpful Hints:

- Trails are marked with painted blazes and reflective plastic markers. These markers enhance night visibility.
- Count on mosquitoes! Repellent and protective clothing help!
- It is advisable to hang your food when camping here.
- Trail maps provide additional information.
- Recycling bins are provided at all the trailheads. Please recycle.

Other Considerations

- Water found along the trails is NOT potable unless it is boiled, filtered, or treated with iodine.
- Be ready for wet weather. In any weather, allow time to find a dry campsite free of poisonous plants.
- The scarcity of visible landmarks on the floodplain terrain makes orientation difficult. Off-trail travel is not recommended.
- The Park is a floodplain of the Congaree River, and is subject to periodic flooding. Most floods occur from December through April, but can occur anytime during the year. Be alert for rising water and be prepared to move your camp if necessary.

Wilderness

REMEMBER! Congaree National Park is a National Park Service site and a wilderness area. ALL PLANTS AND ANIMALS ARE PROTECTED! Please feel free to observe and photograph, but do not handle or disturb them.

As a designated wilderness area, Congaree National Park is tasked with managing this unique resource in as unspoiled condition as possible while providing access for visitors to enjoy its wonders. Boardwalks are maintained to allow access and protect the fragile floodplain ecosystem from excessive foot traffic and resulting soil compaction. Backwoods trails are maintained on a limited basis and may be blocked at any time by fallen trees or debris washed in during a flood. The canoe trail is minimally cleared to allow access with few portages, however at any time there may be numerous obstacles within the creek.

As you enter the wilderness, remember that nature can be tranquil and beautiful, risky, dangerous, and unpredictable all at the same moment

**Information on water levels, temporary closures,
and other visitor and safety information may be obtained
by visiting the Harry Hampton Visitor Center,
or by calling:**

(803) 776-4396

